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 ACTION AF-01

INFO	LOG-00	AID-01	CIAE-00	SMEC-00	OASY-00	DODE-00	DOEE-00
	DS-00	EB-01	EUR-01	OIGO-01	H-01	INM-02	TEDE-00
	INR-00	IO-16	JUSE-00	L-01	ADS-00	NSAE-00	NSCE-00
	OIC-02	OMB-01	PA-02	PM-00	PRS-01	P-01	SNP-00
	SP-00	SR-00	SS-00	STR-01	TRSE-00	T-00	PMB-00
	DSCC-00	PRM-10	PRME-01	DRL-09	G-00		/053W
							-----5BADD 121916Z /38

R 121647Z JUL 94  
 FM AMEMBASSY BUJUMBURA  
 TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4061  
 INFO USEUCOM VAIHINGEN GE  
 AMEMBASSY YAOUNDE  
 AMEMBASSY LONDON  
 AMEMBASSY DAR ES SALAAM  
 AMEMBASSY NAIROBI  
 AMEMBASSY KAMPALA  
 AMEMBASSY PARIS  
 AMEMBASSY KINSHASA  
 USMISSION GENEVA  
 AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS  
 USMISSION USUN NEW YORK

USIA WASHDC 1125

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 DEPT FOR DAS BRYNN, AF/C, DSS/OP, DS/OP/AF, USAID  
 DEPT PASS WHITE HOUSE FOR M. MCLARTY, P. LADER  
 USIA FOR AF AND B/VOA/A  
 EUCOM FOR J3  
 LONDON FOR MCKINLEY; PARIS FOR PERLOW  
 YAOUNDE FOR DAO

E.O. 12356: N/A  
 TAGS: PREF, PREL, PHUM, BY  
 SUBJECT: CAMPS FOR DISPLACED PERSONS; RWANDA BORDER  
 CROSSING IS QUIET

1. TO GET A FEEL AT FIRSTHAND OF THE CONDITIONS IN CAMPS FOR DISPLACED PERSONS, AND THE POSSIBILITY OF THEIR PROVIDING TINDER FOR AN EXPLOSION HERE, REFUGEE OFFICER JULIE O'REAGAN, USAID OFFICER MIKE JUNGE, AND I VISITED SIX CAMPS IN THE AREA AROUND BUJUMBURA ON JULY 10. WE THEN TRAVELED TO THE BORDER CROSSING LOCATED BETWEEN BUGARAMA, RWANDA AND RUGOMBO, IN THE NORTHWEST CORNER OF BURUNDI.

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2. THE CAMPS WERE DIRTY, PRIMITIVE, SADDENING. BUT PROBABLY NOT GREATLY DIRTIER OR MORE PRIMITIVE THAN THE SURROUNDING BUJUMBURA NEIGHBORHOODS - WHICH IS A TRUTH EVEN MORE SADDENING. THE TWO HUTU CAMPS WERE WORST; THE THREE TUTSI CAMPS SLIGHTLY BETTER; THE CAMP FOR RWANDAN ORPHANS, OPENED LAST WEEK, PROBABLY THE BEST. ONLY IT WAS OPERATED BY WESTERNERS, WITH STANDARDS OF HYGIENE NEARER TO THOSE IN DEVELOPED COUNTRIES. THIS CAMP, ADMINISTERED BY MEDICAL PROFESSIONALS WORKING FOR WESTERN NGO'S, WAS ALSO THE BEST ORGANIZED. THE OTHER

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FIVE RECEIVE THEIR FOOD FROM WORLD FOOD PROGRAM, BUT RECEIVE NEITHER MEDICAL AID, ELECTRICITY, NOR ATTENTION FROM THE BURUNDI GOVERNMENT. ONE RESIDENT TOLD US THAT HE HAD NOT SEEN A SINGLE GOVERNMENT OFFICIAL DURING HIS FOUR MONTHS IN THE CAMP.

3. THE CONDITIONS RANGED FROM DIRTY TO SQUALID; THE REPORTED NUMBERS FROM 290 TO 2,800 IN THE DIFFERENT CAMPS. THEIR COMPLAINTS RANGED FROM LACK OF ACCESSIBLE WATER TO LACK OF MEDICINE AND BLANKETS. BUT SURPRISINGLY, THEY DID NOT (WITH ONE EXCEPTION), EVEN WHEN ASKED, COMPLAIN OF LACK OF SECURITY OR MISTREATMENT BY NEIGHBORS OR THE MILITARY. AND DESPITE THEIR WRETCHED CONDITIONS, THEY SEEMED NEITHER HOSTILE NOR INCENDIARY. DISPLACED AND UNHAPPY, YES, BUT MORE DEFEATED THAN ANGRY.

4. THESE CAMPS WERE NOT AMONG THOSE CONSISTING OF STICKS AND PLASTIC SHEETING ON HILLSIDES. ALL THESE WERE IN LARGELY WINDOWLESS BUILDINGS, WITH DIRT OR CEMENT FLOORS, AND OFTEN WITHOUT ELECTRICITY. SOME WERE IN SCHOOLS WHICH MAY NEED TO BE REOCCUPIED IN FALL. IN ALL THE INHABITANTS FELT SO LONG IGNORED THAT THEY GREETED US THREE AMERICANS WITH SURPRISE LIKE THAT OF THE GHOSTS OF HADES ON SEEING AENEAS VISIT THEM LIVE AND BREATHING IN THAT HELL.

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5. THE RWANDA BORDER: ALL QUIET ON THE WESTERN FRONT.

ON JULY 10, AS ON THE PREVIOUS SUNDAY, I DROVE TO THE RWANDAN BORDER. ON JULY 3, I HAD GONE BEYOND KAYANZA TO KANYARU HAUT; THIS TIME, TO THE NORTHWEST CORNER OF BURUNDI, TO THE BORDER IN CIBITOKE PROVINCE.

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ON JULY 3, I HAD SEEN LESS THAN A HALF DOZEN BURUNDI TROOPS AT THE BORDER CHECKPOINT, AND THEY WERE TALKING AMICABLY WITH THEIR RWANDAN COUNTERPARTS AS THEY STOOD TOGETHER ON THE MIDDLE OF THE BRIDGE. THE BORDER CROSSING NEAR RUGAMBO, ON JULY 10, WAS EVEN MORE QUIET. THE ONLY ACTIVITY WAS THE ANIMATED LAUGHTER OF BRIGHTLY-DRESSED ZAIRIAN WOMEN CHUCKLING OVER THEIR CASH RECEIVED UPON SELLING SACKS OF POTATOES, WHICH FILLED THE BEDS OF THREE PICK-UP TRUCKS. RWANDA HAD ONE GOR SOLDIER AND TWO GENDARMES; BURUNDI TWO GENDARMES AND ONE CUSTOMS OFFICER. THE RWANDAN SMILES FADED WHEN THEY REALIZED THEY WERE ONLY MEETING THE AMERICAN AMBASSADOR AND TWO COLLEAGUES; THEIR SMILES WERE PROMPTED BY THE THOUGHT THAT WE WERE FRENCH.

6. THE ONE BURUNDI BORDER GUARD AND THE BURUNDI CUSTOMS OFFICIAL HAD SO LITTLE ACTIVITY THAT THEY INSISTED ON SHOWING

US THE HOT SPRINGS LOCATED JUST 200 YARDS AWAY. AS WE WALKED PAST A TINY COTTON FIELD, THEY ASKED IF WE HAD EVER BEFORE SEEN COTTON. THEY HAD HAD PRECIOUS LITTLE EXCITEMENT, AND NO MILITARY OR REFUGEE ACTIVITY OVER THE PAST 6 MONTHS. THE ONLY ACTIVITY THEY HAD OBSERVED WAS A FRENCH OBSERVATION PLANE THAT THE PREVIOUS DAY HAD FLOWN LOW (ONLY 100 FEET ABOVE THE GROUND, THEY CLAIMED) ALONG THE BORDER. CLEARLY, THE

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ATTITUDES OF THE BURUNDIANS TOWARD THE FRENCH DIFFERED FROM THAT OF THE RWANDANS. WHEN ASKED, THEY THOUGHT IT POSSIBLE THAT CYANGUGU MIGHT HAVE REFUGEES. THUS, ON JULY 10, AT 5:00 PM, AT THE BORDER CROSSING AT RUGAMBO, WE CAN REPORT THAT IT WAS ALL QUIET ON THE WESTERN FRONT.

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